

K A M T S C H A T K A. 85

which grows upon the Great River; but neither he nor I ever ¹³⁷
 saw this in the flower: 5thly, *matista sladka trava**, or the ⁸²⁴
 sweet plant, is as useful in their oeconomy as the *faranne*; ²⁶³
 for the *Kamtshadales* use this not only as a confection in tarts ²⁷³
 and broths, but in all their superstitious ceremonies this is abso- ¹⁷⁷
 lutely necessary. The *Russians* were no sooner settled there, than
 they found that brandy was to be distilled from it; and at
 present this is the only brandy that is publickly sold. The
 root of this herb is without yellowish, within, white; and
 of a bitter, spicy taste. The stem is fleshy, of three or four ¹³⁷
 joints, and about a man's height. Its flower is a reddish green,
 with short white hairs, longest near the root. The leaves upon
 the stem nearest the root are five or six, and sometimes even ten:
 they grow upon thick, round, fleshy, green, rough stalks, marked
 with little red spots. Upon the main stem, at every joint, arises
 one such leaf, but without a stalk. The flowers are small
 and white, like fennel, or other herbs of that sort; and
 consist of five leaves, of which the innermost are largest, and the
 outward smallest. It has two ovaria upon every flower, upon
 short small necks; and round them are five white stamina with
 green points, which rise higher than the flower. The flowers,
 taken all together, resemble a plate; while the stalks which
 support the umbella are longest without, and in the middle
 shortest: stalks arise from every joint, upon which are
 flowers.

This plant abounds every where in *Kamtshatka*, and the inha- ²²²
 bitants gather and prepare it in this manner: they cut off the ²⁵²
 stalks of the leaves which grow nearest the root, and with a shell

* *Spondylium foliis pinnatifidis*. Linn. Clif.

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is only the richer sort of people that use this brandy; and what they sell is only the first running, which makes a very good dram. 273

Two pood of herbs¹ generally render one vedro * of the first running, and the pood costs four rubles or more. The herbs that remain in the still after drawing off all the spirit, are made use of as a yeast, instead of berries, to ferment other infusions or wort; and what they cannot use thus the cattle eat very greedily, and it fattens them much. It is remarkable that brandy distilled from the plants from which the skin has not been clean scraped, it causes melancholy and perturbation of mind. Mr Steller made the following remarks upon this brandy: 1st, that it is very piercing, and contains a good deal of a sharp acid, which coagulates the blood and makes it black: 2dly, that a small quantity of it makes people drunk and quite senseless, and causes their faces to turn black: 3dly, that if a person drinks a few drams of it, he is plagued the whole night with disagreeable dreams, and next day is uneasy and disturbed as if terrified with the apprehension of the greatest misfortune: and, what is very extraordinary, he has seen some people the day after they have been drunk with this spirit, from one draught of cold water, become again so drunk that they could not stand upon their feet. They wet their hair with the juice, which they squeeze out of this herb in the spring, as a preservative against lice, and find it to be their only relief. Many of the Kamtschadales, who desire to have children, will not eat this herb, green or dry, imagining that it impairs the generative faculties. 251 273 224 242

The herb kipri†, which grows in all Europe and Asia, has the third place in the food of the Kamtschadales. They

* Vedro is a Russian liquid measure containing 25 pints.

† Epilobium. Linn. Succ. Spec. 1. French willows.

1. [the sweet herb, sphondylium foliolis
pinnetifidis Linn. Cliff.

boil

⁸²⁴₂₉₁ roll it about their legs, and it serves for stockings. The women wrap it round their bodies, from an opinion that the ⁸⁴²₇₈₂ warmth promotes fruitfulness. It serves to light their fires, ⁷⁸²₃₇₂ being easily kindled. On great holidays they bind garlands of it about the heads and necks of their idols; and when they make any sacrifice, or kill any wild beast, they offer some of this plant as an atonement, that the relations of the beast which is killed may be appeased. Formerly they did the same by the heads of their enemies: after having adorned them with these garlands, they performed several forceries, and then stuck them upon poles. The Cossacks call this plant *tentchitze*.

^{3/4}₂₈₃ Few plants are of more general use than the nettles; for being without any kind of hemp, they would have no materials to make nets of for fishing, which is absolutely necessary for the support of life. They pull them up in the months of *August* or *September*, and binding them in bunches lay them to dry in the shade. When they dress them, they first split them with their teeth, then peel off the skin, and beat them. After this they comb them, then spin them between their hands, and wind them up upon spindles. The thread of the first spinning, they use for sewing, but to make their nets they double and twist it; which, after all, never last above one summer. The truth is they are very ignorant and unskilful in this manufacture; and moreover they neither steep their nettles, nor boil their yarn.

1. *Plant resembling Cyperoides, which is dressed.*

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223 ing; sometimes they use a liquor made of a large mushroom, with which the *Russians* kill flies. This they prepare with the juice of *epilobium*, or *French willow*.

The first symptom of a man's being affected with this liquor is a trembling in all his joints, and in half an hour he begins to rave as if in a fever; and is either merry or melancholy mad, according to his peculiar constitution. Some jump, dance, and sing; others weep, and are in terrible agonies, a small hole appearing to them as a great pit, and a spoonful of water as a lake: but this is to be understood of those who use it to excess; for taken in a small quantity it raises their spirits, and makes them brisk, courageous, and chearful.

276 It is observed, whenever they have eaten of this plant, they
 824 maintain that, whatever foolish things they did, they only obeyed
 828 the commands of the mushroom: however, the use of it is certainly so dangerous, that unless they were well looked after it would be the destruction of numbers of them. The *Kamtshadals* do not much care to relate these drunken frolicks, and perhaps the continual use of it renders it less dangerous to them. One of our *Cossacks* resolved to eat of this mushroom in order to surprise his comrades; and this he actually did, but it was with great difficulty they preserved his life. Another of the inhabitants of *Kamtshatka*, by the use of this mushroom, imagined that he was upon the brink of hell ready to be thrown in, and that the mushroom ordered him to fall upon his knees, and make a full confession of all the sins he could remember, which he did before a great number of his comrades, to their no small diversion. It is related, that a soldier of the garrison having eaten a little of this mushroom, walked a great way without any fatigue, but at last, having taken too great
 276 a quantity, he died. My interpreter drank some of this juice without knowing of it, and became so mad, that it was with difficulty that we kept him from ripping open his
 his

291 fingle deer skin, that covers and fits close to
 824 every part of the body, so that the children
 854 seem to be entirely sewed up. An opening
 at the bottom, before and behind, affords
 an opportunity of cleaning them. This
 opening is covered with another piece of
 skin, which may be fastened and lifted up at
 pleasure; it supports a tuft of moss*, placed
 like a clout between the legs of the child,
 and which is renewed as often as it becomes
 necessary. Besides the common sleeves,
 there are two others hanging to the gar-
 ment to place the arms of the child in when
 it is cold; the extremities are sewed up, and
 the sleeves lined on the inside with moss.
 There is also a hood fitted to it, made of the
 same materials as the rest of the dress; but
 in yourts the heads of the children are al-
 most always bare, and the hood hangs there-
 fore upon their shoulders. Beside all this,

* They make use of the herb called *tonnchitcha* for the same purpose.

they

133 that the hand could not be borne in it. Of these, as in Japan,
515 there are many throughout the country, and they are greatly used
 for bathing purposes. At Malka, between Narchiki and Gunal,
 there is a spring of sulphurous water of great heat, in close proximity
 to another which is said even during the summer to stand steadily at
 the freezing point. We were, however, unable to visit it, and turned
 northward, passing across a *tundra* nine miles in length, and
 uninteresting enough in such weather. We had the pleasure,
 however, of seeing Vodki deposited in five feet of water in con-
 sequence of having fallen asleep upon his horse, but it must be
 confessed that our amusement was somewhat damped by discovering
 that our own personal baggage had suffered a like immersion.

We camped once more in a birch-wood, and but for the
 proximity of these trees we should have had no little difficulty in
 making a fire, as the
 forest was dripping wet.

322 The birch is to the
824 inhabitant of northern
531 regions very much what
 the bamboo is to the
 native of the south. It
 is his general-utility tree,
 and without it he would
 indeed be badly off. The
 stem is used in the con-
 struction of the sledges,
 and the inner bark is
 said to be cut green and
 used for food. From the
 knotty parts of the wood



BIRCH-BARK BOX.

good spoons are made, while the multifarious uses to which the
 smooth and pliant bark is adapted in the construction of dishes,
 cups, and vessels of all kinds are so well known by every northern
 traveller as to need no description. The boxes are often much

"The productions of nature [CMC: in central Kamchatka] are, a small kind of wild black cherry (tsheromka), in great abundance; the wood of which, being particularly hard, is used by the Kamtshadals for their guiding sticks to the sledges: the thickest trees that I have seen are nine or ten inches in circumference. Firs, common pine and larch trees of extraordinary size, with birch, poplar, asp, and mountain-ash, clothe the mountains to their summit. The underwoods are, currant, dog-rose, hawthorn, alder, and bushes producing berries.

The climate is very different from that of the southern and northern parts of the peninsula, the valley being completely sheltered from the sea-breezes that chill the air in other parts, and prove a great check to vegetation, which commences here in the month of March. The scenery is beautiful beyond description, [291] the river meandering through the midst of the valley, from 50 to 250 yards wide, and from eight to 15 feet deep, and being replete with trout and every species of salmon in the season. This valley is 180 miles in length, frequently opening prospects of the Tolbatshinsk, a lofty double-headed mountain, constantly emitting an immense column of black smoke; while the second volcano, Klutshefskoi, towering to an incredible height, illuminates the clouds with its blaze, and affords a view awfully grand."

27: Sauer--291-292

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Kamchadal

116, 177, 283, 563, 824,

Russia

636. 24

"Twelve versts below Virchnoi Kamtshatskoi Ostrog, is the village called Milkovoi, inhabited by farmers sent from Siberia at government expence, and possessing particular emoluments, for the purpose of growing corn and pulse to supply the country. They live uncontrolled, however, and find it easier to accumulate wealth, by acting as retailers for the merchants of Kamtshatka, and going themselves on the chase for sables, &c. ; than in pursuing the more toilsome labour of cultivating the earth, which they neglect. Yet they keep gardens that produce very fine cabbages, potatoes, turnips, carrots, cucumbers, &c.; they also grow buck-wheat and rye for their own use, which yield abundantly; and I am inclined to think that, had they a proper inspector to superintend their business, they might with ease grow corn enough of every kind to supply not only the peninsula, but all the neighbouring country, Ochotsk, &c. Hemp grows remarkably well, which, however, I think, there is no need of cultivating; for the nettle seems equally to answer every purpose. The Kamtshadals and Russians make sewing thread of it, and fabricate from it their fishing nets, which serve them, if used with caution, and properly dried, four or five years. The process of preparing it is nearly the same as that for hemp, but I think less troublesome; the nettle grows to the height of six and seven [292] feet; the fibres are much finer; and thread of equal thickness is stronger than that made of the imported hemp."